



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
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UMTA 76-54

Robert E. Patricelli, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) announced today two grants totaling \$4,067,768 to Tucson, Arizona to assist in the purchase of 36 new air-conditioned, diesel-powered transit buses and related transit equipment, and also to provide funds to help cover operating expenses of the City's public transportation system.

In announcing the grant, Patricelli pointed to the substantial increase in ridership over the past five years, from 1,443,000 riders in 1970 to 5,962,762 passengers last year, which he attributed to "a substantial local commitment to improve mass transit service and equipment." He further praised local government officials for "an exceptionally high degree of concern for persons dependent on public transportation in Tucson, especially the elderly and handicapped."

He cited Tucson's policy of no fare and other special services for elderly, handicapped and low income persons as "an especially important innovation to help these people make significant contributions to society."

The city-owned and operated Tucson Transit Corporation operates 103 buses in the northern and eastern sections of the City while the privately-owned Old Pueblo Transit Corporation operates 20 buses in the southern and western portions of the city.

The first grant, for \$2,433,768, supplements a previous award of \$2,496,720 and helps buy 36 new buses of varying sizes. Twelve buses are 40 to 53-passenger capacity, 12 carry 40 to 45-passengers, 10 carry 31 to 35-passengers and two are 18 to 21-passenger buses. Six vans included in the project are replacements for a like number of vans used to provide free service to handicapped individuals and low-income elderly persons. Two of the six vans will be equipped with hydraulic lifts to accommodate wheelchair users. The 10 new 31 to 35-passenger buses will replace nine buses and expand the Old Pueblo Transit Corporation's 20 bus fleet to 21 for additional service on existing routes.

The remaining new buses will replace leased vehicles and allow for increased service on existing Tucson Transit Corporation circulation and feeder service routes.

Funds also are included to help cover a higher than anticipated cost of new buses purchased under the original grant. (UMTA Project No. AZ-03-0003).

The second grant of \$1,634,000 represents release of funds apportioned to urbanized areas under Section 5 of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended. These funds help cover eligible operating expenses of the Tucson Transit Corporation and Old Pueblo Transit Corporation from July 1, 1975 through June 30, 1976. (UMTA Project No. AZ-05-4003).

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A local source for additional information is Mr. John Allen, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, 250 West Alameda, Tucson, Arizona 85703, (602) 791-4371.

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